

SENATOR **Nell Soto** 32nd Senatorial District

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SENATOR NELL SOTO'S NEW ANTI-GRAFFITI BILL CRACKS DOWN ON POSSESSION OF TOOLS USED FOR GRAFFITI

Bill Eliminates 'Intent' in Existing Law for Possession

Sacramento – Responding to requests for help from law enforcement officials in fighting an escalating graffiti problem, Senator Nell Soto (D-Pomona) announced details of a new bill that would toughen existing laws on possession of items used for graffiti.

“Graffiti is vandalism, it is destroying our neighborhoods and promoting a bad environment,” says Senator Soto. “Law enforcement officials in my district say they need help, so I will do what I can to help. We need to find a way to stop this vandalism and save our neighborhoods from exposure to the bad element graffiti promotes.”

The new bill *expands* the list of items that are commonly used to commit vandalism or graffiti. The added items include an *aerosol spray-can tip, a paint stick and any other marking substance commonly used to deface, damage or destroy property, such as acrylic paint tubes, oil paint tubes, shoe dyes, and etching solutions.*

SB 1626 makes it unlawful for a minor to possess these items in a public setting, *regardless of intent*. It also mandates that *anyone, a minor or adult*, convicted of possession of any of these items, perform not less than 24 hours of community service.

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The bill is supported by the San Bernardino Police Department, which created a version of this bill in a local ordinance. Soto's bill is modeled after the San Bernardino ordinance, which has reduced graffiti crime by 28%.

"This is not a fad or prank, it is an organized culture that is constantly evolving and expanding." says Sgt. Dwight Waldo, head of San Bernardino Police Department's Graffiti Task Force. "Any city that does not focus on graffiti will lose out to any city that does, because of the perception of crime brought on by graffiti."

Senator Soto announced the details of her bill during a news conference today in San Bernardino. San Bernardino Mayor Judith Valles, Police Chief Garrett Zimmon, Sgt. Dwight Waldo and Riverside Against Taggers, a community group, joined her.

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